



- ✓ BillHooks
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Our *international* membership is happily involved with "Anything that goes 'cut'!"

October 2004

BillHooks

By Bill Swinger

"The English billhook is found in many patterns. Perhaps it would be more correct to talk of the British billhook, as numerous distinctive patterns come from Wales, albeit mainly border areas. All these patterns evolved to take account of local variations for the sort of work necessary as well as personal preferences. Fig 1 is a



photo of a range of billhooks with a progression of curves and nose length. They are all of the simplest and commonest type, being single edged hooks, with tanged handles and a double sharpening bevel. All these billhooks would have been available in 9" or 10" blade length (some down to 8" and up to 12"). This selection includes both 9" and 10" hooks, only because they are what I have.

1. Hampshire style billhook by Elwell 3711/10". A classic coppicing hook, used especially by hurdle makers and other coppice produce workers. The long nose hook almost at right angles to the handle makes it convenient for splitting hazel rods for hurdle making, etc. Also the nose section can be used to make upward cuts when cutting hazel coppice, so minimising splitting and encouraging best regrowth from the hazel stool. Also for extending the reach when picking up rods from the ground!

2. Tenterden style billhook by Elwell 3901/10". One of a number of Kentish patterns. This hook is often regarded as the standard general purpose coppice hook. While it has similar attributes to the Hampshire hook, it is less exaggerated.

These two patterns almost epitomise the South of England where coppice industries were dominant. Elsewhere, billhooks were mainly used for more general and, often heavier, work, including of course, hedgelaying:

3. Brades. 9" billhook. Without access to a Brades' catalogue I cannot positively identify the pattern, but it is of a general type variously named as Swindon and Wiltshire, through Berkshire and Newtown (curved pattern) to Stafford (single edged pattern). The Elwell catalogue number for their Newtown (curved) was 2687. A general purpose hook, as evidenced by its appearance in various forms in various parts of the country. It is more suitable for general work, including hedgelaying, than a Tenterden pattern, but not so handy for coppice work.

4. Newtown straight pattern, by Elwell 2976/9". The nose does not interfere with stems other than the one you are working on, yet the curve is useful when it is necessary to cut round the 'other side' of the stem, and also when cutting upwards when removing the unwanted stub on the root stool. For myself, I find the curve just insufficient to be really useful.

5. Rodding hook by Elwell 2678/10". One of the few hooks not named after a locality or town in Great Britain. Presumably, it was used for doing something (I know not what) to rods! This is the only one of these hooks that I don't currently use. Once I have the edge in decent shape it will serve for splitting kindling and small logs.

There are perhaps two standard patterns missing from this sequence. The Knighton (Elwell 2853) is similar to the Rodding hook but has a very shallow concave curve along its whole length and so fits between Nos. 4 and 5; and the Rutland billhook (Elwell 2944) which is again similar but has a shallow convex curve along its length, rightly belonging at the end of the sequence. I am trying to obtain examples of these hooks but neither is particularly common.

Although the South-East of England was renowned for its coppice industries, it did produce hooks for other purposes, including hedgelaying; the Kent billhook (such as the Elwell 2987) being an obvious example. Fig. 2 shows both sides of a 10" Moss made billhook, of the late 19th century. Moss



Recognize Recent Reproductions

by Frank Trzaska

Seems you can't go to a gun show any more without seeing a modern made Ka-Bar Mark 2 for sale listed as a World War Two survivor. Is it that we have so many crooks among our ranks or is it that they just don't know the difference? I prefer to choose the latter path but do not know the answer to the question.

As I often repeat "Knowledge is Power" so we will explore the differences in the Mark Two in the post war example. It is extremely simple to tell the difference in the post war Kabar Mark 2 if you have:

- A) read this article or one similar to it.
- B) handled a few of the millions out there.

Actually you need to do both. Neither alone will set you on the path to enlightenment. Reading all you can about knives is great, I advocate it wholeheartedly. It is not only knowledge gaining but an enjoyable method of seeing new knives that for many reasons will never be in your collection. It is not the only answer, you must also handle all the knives you can. At most knife shows custom makers or sellers do not want you handling their knives unless you are interested in possibly purchasing. This is not true of them all but in my experience it is. On the flip side most militaria dealers do not care if you hold and examine the knives, in fact they insist on it most times. Again this is not a law; it is just my experience. If I had a \$3,000.00 custom knife, I would not want any joker walking by picking it up and playing with it. A \$100.00 common Mark 2 they can handle anytime they want. Stands to reason. Anyway handle all the knives you can.

Now with the power of both on your side, you are guarded against most of the more



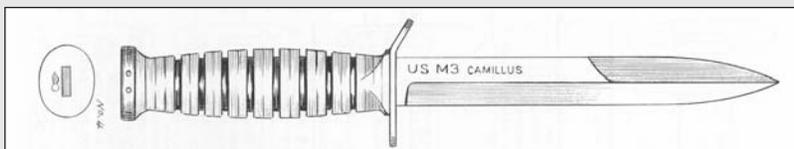
Original or Repro?

common fake items. With the level of craftsmanship displayed today, a top level machinist with a knowledge of collecting could make any knife on the planet; and the best could not tell it was a fake. All we can do is arm ourselves as best we can. The good part is that a person capable of that level would, in most cases, not even contemplate such a deception and if they did would have to be compensated greatly. This rules out the common Mark 2 as there just isn't enough money in it. So enough about the philosophy and on to the differences.

The single most identifying feature of the new knife is the pommel and its attaching method.

All reproduction knives made by Ka-Bar since the reintroduction in 1977 have the thick pommel (3/8") with a pin to retain it. This combination was never used in the WW II variations by any manufacturer. All pinned pommels of WW II made knives were of the thin (1/4") pommel version. On top of this we have the pinning method. On the modern knives the pin is only visible on one side. It is inserted through the pommel and the tang but does not protrude out the other side. This method was only used on the modern knives, not by any manufacturers during WW II. Of the pinned pommels made during WW II, they all were through-pins which can be seen on both sides of the pommel. Be careful as when the finish is applied it can be hard to spot the pins in many cases.

It is so easy to tell the WW II made knives from the modern ones I often wonder who buys such knives. In most cases it would be new collectors who will be deceived. Now what if the knife does not have its original handle on it? A home work shop knife or Theatre made example that are coming out of the wood work today. Not having the pommel



to examine, how do we know if it is real or actually of the correct time period for we can never know if these types of knives are real. We can examine the markings. On the modern made knives the stamping is very bold and

deep. Much deeper and larger than any Mark 2 of WW II vintage I have ever seen. The WW II knives do not even come close to this depth of stamping. Remember they thought it was weakening the blades so the stamping depth was set shallow, in some cases not all the letters are readable on a WW II blade. Every post war Ka-Bar Mark 2 I have seen exhibited extremely well struck lettering.

You can't just read this in a book you have to look at the knives themselves to learn the differences in these markings. Buy a modern Ka-Bar for \$49.95 and see for yourself. Think of it as insurance, it's cheap to buy it

before the mishap. The knives made today have an epoxy like coating on the blade which makes them shiny and smooth; this finish was never used by any manufacturer during WW II and is easy to spot. When the knives were first reintroduced they were made with a parkerized finish, this is a finish that was used by all of the makers so be careful. Just because the knife is parkerized does not mean it is WW II made, it could be from the early batch made in 1977.

Scabbards are another point to look at. Any scabbard with the large USMC emblem of the "Eagle, Globe and Anchor" imprinted into the face is post war made. None were made by any manufacturer during WW II. Lately we have also seen scabbards and knives stamped U.S. Army with the Army Eagle, these too are modern items. These are fantasy items as none were ever produced during WW II. As you can see Ka-Bar took many steps to protect the collector and also re-create a knife they have a proud heritage with. If you know the points to look at, you can easily enjoy pointing them out to others once you get the hang of it.

The second most common knife I have seen in my travels is the Camillus

produced M3. Touted by Camillus as being produced on the same dies, it is an almost exact reproduction of the highly sought after M3. The first thing you will notice is the scabbard. It looks nothing like a M6

continued on page 4

OKCA Knews and Musings

ibdennis

Cracker Jacks.....

When I was a kid just a few years back, I loved getting **Cracker Jacks**. I don't recall whether I liked the eating better than the anticipation of the surprise inside. So what does this have to do with the Oregon Knife Club?

The best form of advertising we have (besides word of mouth) is the flyers (notes, handbills, adverts, etc) that fit easily into an envelope or sit proudly on tables at gun and knife shows. We have these made up padded in bundles of 25 flyers. The local folks do well at spreading the flyers, but I think a deeper penetration would encourage more to come to our April Show. Bigger is better, no? So what does this have to do with **Cracker Jacks**?

I would like to encourage everyone to disperse flyers so write, call, email, yell, scream or communicate how many pads of 25 flyers I can mail (snail mail); and you can help get the word out and remind people of the Show. OK now about the **Cracker Jacks**. Every package that I mail out will contain a surprise. And if this works out, a second surprise will be yours when you come to the Show and claim your own box of **Cracker Jacks** that we will have waiting for you at the Show. Only those who spread the flyers will get the box. Help become a "cracker jack" Show promoter.

Wanna Consign Your Custom Knives?

I received a letter from the **Excalibur Knife** store in Valley River Center, Eugene OR. They are willing to allocate a space to have your custom knives placed in their store for sale. Space is limited and you can work out the consignment arrangements with them. Contact Glenda Brown at Excalibur at the VRC or call (541)687-0872.

Mini Show.....

The Winter Mini Show will be held on Saturday, December 11. Reservations are coming in fast and furious. Get yours in now or you may get left out. You do not want that to happen because last year it rained so hard that being out would get you pretty wet. Tables are free to paid members.

The pot luck will be held shortly after the Show; **June Morrison** will be heading up this event.

It is not too early to make



reservations for the Mini Winter Show. You may e-mail your request to the OKCA e-mail addresses or call (541)484-5564 or write. Just do it. The show will be held in the round building that has heat and light and good foods. Same as Winter 2003, but a bit different than we used to know.

Security name is out

In anticipation of a problem with our "Show staff" that helps do our people moving, we are changing their name. It seems silly but we want to stay one step ahead of the legal beagles that forever haunt our Show. The same people in the orange vests that have moved us and looked out for us will be doing the same thing but with a different name. By the way the paramedic who was in attendance last year was not a mandate but added by us as a benefit to those who attended our Show. We have come to better understand the term "vicarious liability." Not to worry as we will handle that one. And you thought that putting on a knife show was merely opening the doors and letting people come in. Nope!

Club Knife.....

In this issue you will find an application for the Club knife for 2005. This is the first ever Damascus knife we have offered. This is a special deal Ford Swauger has passed on at a special price. He is also making the Oregon Special version which can only be had as a set and only to Oregon residents. These sets can only be picked up at the Show. No mailing.

The serial number game has always been a problem. These knives will be marked and serial numbered. For the last two years we offered the same serial numbers to those who supported the Club with a purchase of these knives. When I suggested the problems that were encountered with the reservation of serial numbers, there was a hoot and holler that rattled my ears.

So here it is: For those who had the same serial number for "both" the 2003 and the 2004 knife (both numbers the same) these people can have the same serial number if paid for by December 15th, 2004. All other numbers will be random drawn. Please note that the hoot and holler suddenly went to a pleasant silence. This will all be based on the original purchaser.

Only 25 of the Oregon Special knives will be made, and they will be serial numbered along with the manual knives from 1 to 25. We stretched this last year, but we cannot do this again.

Please note that the bone handles have been treated so they will be perfect for scrimshaw. We are currently working on something that might interest the people who purchase this 2005 knife. More on this later.

Newsletter ads.....

We received several new ads for the Newsletter. Check 'em out and send one in. Not to forget that we also try and post these on our website.

Articles, articles, articles

A big thank you to our writers that help keep this Newsletter alive and well. This month we thank **Jim Taylor (Florida)**, **Merle Spencer (Oregon coast)**, **Frank Trzaska (New Jersey)**, **Gerald Scott (Renton Washington)** and **Bill Swinger (England)** for their contribution to the October issue.

Although good for the next month or so with articles, that "well" will run dry. Please help us by giving us articles and keeping our cupboard full. So many knifers with so much knowledge... please share with us.

Knives that make me Smile.....

Mark Zalesky from Knoxville TN sent this month's KTMMS picture. This knife or rather knives were made by J. Dixon Cutlery Co. Germany. Look around and see if you have a KTMYS and send us a picture.



Places to lay your head down whilst here.....

We have still retained the same price at the Valley River Inn as we have for the last few years. Ya gotta mention the OKCA Show to get this pricing. Is it too early to reserve a room? Nope. I checked and they are ready for you now. Their operators are standing by.

The Valley River Inn -(800)543-8266 - (541)687-0123 -Our top recommendation. Fills up fast. A quality place to stay. Official home for folks away from home visiting the Oregon Knife Show. Special Show rates if you mention the OKCA Show.

The Campbell House -A City Inn - (800)264-2519 -(541)343-1119 -Classic Hospitality. A very unique experience. Top quality.

Courtesy Inn - (888)259-8481 -(541)345-3391 -The closest motel yet to the Knife Show. A budget motel and special rates if you mention the Knife Show.

were a family of fine edge tool makers working at various localities around the West Sussex/Hampshire/Surrey borders. Sadly, only one returned from service in the Great War. Later, the remaining business was bought out by Elwell, passing subsequently to Spear and Jackson. The maker's stamp, though rather unclear, is "B, W. & A MOSS," indicating it was from the forge of Benjamin and his sons, William and Andrew, in Conford, Hampshire. The hook is typical of Moss work; hand forged, laminated and forge hardened. The tang is substantial; being 1 cm (almost 7/16") wide as it emerges from the handle and the hook tapers through its length towards the nose and to the cutting edge. There is a hint of swelling to a thicker nose, but not so pronounced as some I have seen. The curve of the cutting edge to the nose is gentle and the shape is not dissimilar to the Chichester (West Sussex) pattern offered by Thos. Staniforth in the early 20th century. This hook has a single (right handed) sharpening bevel. Although probably originally fitted with a round handle, this example has a (modern) oval handle. Whatever its intended purpose the hook has all the attributes of a fine hedgelaying hook and it performs well as such."

editors note: If you want to know more about English Billhooks go to the OKCA April Knewslettter - April 2002. ✂

Club Knife 2005

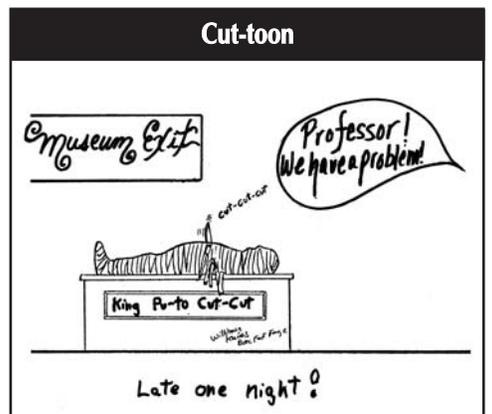
By Gerald Scott

I wanted to say a few words about the next Club knife. I've seen a lot of pretty nice club knives; I've bought some, more in recent years since the kids are grown. I like the idea of being able to keep up with what top knifemakers are doing. I've collected these little folders for as long as I can remember. So it was with great delight and anticipation last year when I got to Ford Swauger's table. He always has clever and beautiful work, and I like seeing him and talking with him because he's always enthusiastic about whatever he's been working on. He had some really cool stuff there. Knives with the switch worked into the handle work. A lot of Damascus steel blades. He had a flintlock pistol made entirely of his own Damascus steel except the handle grips, of course. The work, as usual was exquisite, in detail and intricacy. Then I saw a little folder with a thumb lug. Oh, what a beautiful knife!

This knife had a bone handle and steel bolsters, but the liners were all filed and the bolsters and blade were of matching Damascus. The textures were very intriguing and subtle. I opened it and realized that it was just about perfect. This little folder pushed me back to the crusades, the symmetry and balance were stunning. I

could see the Arab beating the steel over and over until he had this perfect shape and mass just waiting for exactly the right man to come and take it away to defeat the infidels or save the princess; you can pick the story. Well this was quite a find so I asked Ford to make me a deal on this knife, knowing full well that if I never bought another knife I'd be very happy with this one.

Ford told me that he couldn't sell it because he needed to get digital measurements. He was going to make this knife into the 2005 Club knife so I couldn't have it. That was disappointing but you can bet, I'll be first in line to buy this Club knife; and if I miss that I'll order one anyway because I know the maker and so do the rest of you or you will soon. ✂



Continued from page 2

scabbard of World War Two. This should be easy to point out as it would be like comparing a Chevrolet to a Cadillac, they are not even close in appearance. Hit the books to determine what a real M6 looks like and ignore anything that doesn't look that way, you will be safe. But like anything else in the knife world, the scabbards can be easily changed. The common M8 fiber scabbard is readily available so placing a modern M3 in one would be what most fakers would turn to. This would be a good time to point out that any knife that has a condition that does NOT match the scabbard should be considered spurious. This is not to condemn them all but to issue a word of warning that caution should be taken.

If they are of the same age and went through the same actions, they should be at least common in condition. Just be careful. The knife itself can be a little more difficult. The M3 was originally blade marked with very large, deep markings, a collector's dream knife. The recent Camillus offering is

also well marked, in fact it is almost identical to an original. Unless you have handled many M3's I would caution you to NOT compare markings unless you have a known original with you to compare with. As dies age they often produce different marks in both depth and sharpness. This alone can attribute a difficulty only the very well experienced can tell apart. The method we should choose is again with the pommel. During World War Two the methods used to attach the pommel to the tang by the manufacturers were:

1) peening or staking, this method left the tang exposed slightly beyond the pommel and a heavy force was used to peen or crush the exposed tang over the pommel. Different devises were used which left different designs on the tang / pommel junction. Perhaps the most common was the "sunburst" design.

2) pinning, this method was much like the Mark 2 in that a small pin was placed through a hole in the pommel and tang, then finished off on both sides to be flush.

All of the Camillus production during the

War was with pinned tangs. The curious part is the pinning method. While Camillus and others used a single pin on the Mark 2, the M3 was built with dual pins. Two side by side pins were placed in the pommel / tang junction to form the favored retention method. The recent production of the M3 by Camillus on the other hand is built using only the single pin method. Any M3 that is blade marked Camillus and has a single pinned pommel is newly made, don't fall for it. Other then that one item it would be extremely difficult, if not impossible, to tell the difference. Yes, a talented individual could switch pommels with a knife of WW II vintage, but in most cases the fakers don't go to so much trouble as it just isn't necessary. One word of caution should be mentioned here, with your new found knowledge do not approach a seller or dealer and tell them the knife they have on display is a fake, you are only asking for trouble. If asked it is a different story. The moral here is to "walk softly but carry a big stick."

Frank Trzaska [trz@mcsystems.net]





OREGON KNIFE COLLECTORS ASSOCIATION

BOX 2091 • EUGENE, OR 97402

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION AND SHOW TABLE CONTRACT

PLEASE RETURN THIS ENTIRE PAGE or a photocopy. DO NOT CUT IT UP!

Name(s) _____

Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone: Eve (_____) _____ Day (_____) _____ Date _____

* Collector * Knifemaker * Dealer * Mfr./Distrib. * Other _____

OKCA membership includes newsletter, dinner/swap meetings, free admission to OKCA shows, free OKCA Winter show tables, right to buy OKCA club knife.

___ Start/ ___ Renew my/our OKCA membership (\$20 individual/\$23 family) \$ _____

30TH ANNUAL OREGON KNIFE SHOW • APRIL 8-10, 2005 470 — 8'x30" TABLES

Exhibit Hall, Lane County Convention Center and Fairgrounds, 796 West 13th Ave., Eugene, Oregon.
FOR INFORMATION CONTACT SHOW CHAIRMAN: DENNIS ELLINGSEN, (541) 484-5564

AUTOMATIC RESERVATIONS: If you had a table at the 2004 Show, you have an automatic reservation for the same table in 2005, but THIS RESERVATION EXPIRES DECEMBER 15, 2004. You may still apply for a table after this date, but we cannot guarantee a table after December 15. NO RESERVATIONS HONORED OR APPLICATIONS ACCEPTED WITHOUT FULL PAYMENT! Note to NEW exhibitors: your table(s) will be assigned after 12/15/04.

ALL TABLE HOLDERS AND VISITORS agree to abide by the OKCA show rules, and to hold the OKCA, its officers, and the Lane County Fair Board harmless for any accident, loss, damage, theft, or injury.

ANY QUESTION OR DISPUTE arising during the show shall be resolved by the Show Chairman, whose decision shall be final.

THIS IS A KNIFE SHOW. All tables must be predominantly knives or knife related items (e.g. swords, axes, edged tools, edged weapons, knife books, knifemaking supplies). If in doubt, check with the Show Chairman ahead of time. The OKCA reserves the right to bar any item from display or sale. No firearms made after 1898 may be sold or shown at this show.

ALL EXHIBITORS are required to keep their tables set up throughout the public hours of the Show: 9 AM Saturday to 3 PM Sunday. ANY EXHIBITOR WHO LEAVES OR COVERS THEIR TABLE BEFORE 3 PM SUNDAY FORFEITS HIS FUTURE RESERVATIONS AND WILL BE DENIED TABLES AT FUTURE OREGON KNIFE SHOWS.

DISPLAY TABLES will be around the perimeter of the room. All displays are eligible for display awards, which are handmade knives donated by members and supporters of OKCA. Display judging will be by rules established by OKCA. Special category awards may also be offered. **NOTHING MAY BE SOLD FROM DISPLAY TABLES.**

SALE/TRADE TABLES Sharing of tables will not be allowed. Exhibitors must comply with all applicable local, state, and federal laws. Oregon has NO SALES TAX.

BADGES: Each table holder is entitled to one additional show badge.

KNIFEMAKERS who are present and are table holders at this show may enter knives in the knifemaking award competition.

FOR MORE INFORMATION on categories and judging criteria in the display and handmade knife competitions, contact the Show Chairman.

SECURITY will be provided by OKCA from 10AM Friday until 4 PM Sunday. However, exhibitors are responsible for watching their own tables. Neither the OKCA nor the Lane County Fair Board will be responsible for any loss, theft, damage, or injury of any kind.

CITY AND COUNTY REGULATIONS require that there be:

- No Smoking within the Exhibit Hall at any time;
- No alcoholic beverages consumed within the Exhibit Hall during the public hours of the show;
- No loaded firearms worn or displayed at the show;
- No swords or knives brandished or displayed in a provocative manner.

Violators of these safety rules will be asked to leave.

NOTE ON SWITCHBLADES AND DAGGERS: In Oregon it is legal to make, sell, buy, or own switchblade knives. However, it is **ILLEGAL** to carry a switchblade knife, a gravity knife, a dagger, or a dirk concealed on one's person, or for a convicted felon to possess a switchblade or gravity knife. Most other states have banned switchblade knives. Under federal law, it is **ILLEGAL** to mail, carry, or ship a switchblade or gravity knife across state lines.

SHOW SCHEDULE

Friday, April 8, 2005. 10am - 8pm set-up; open **ONLY** to table-holders and members of OKCA.

Saturday, April 9, 2005. 7am - 9am set-up. **9am - 6pm** open to public.

Sunday, April 10, 2005 8am - 9am set-up. **9am - 3pm** open to public.

Tables that are cancelled will revert back to the OKCA. Subcontracting tables is not permitted.

EXHIBITOR CONTRACT: PLEASE ENCLOSE FULL PAYMENT WITH THIS FORM. Full refund granted if reservation canceled by February 15, 2005; for later cancellation, refund will be granted only if your table is rented to someone else. **DON'T GET LEFT OUT!!! MAIL THIS PAGE AND YOUR CHECK TODAY. A signature is required.**

Type of knives on your tables _____

Name for second badge _____ (two badges per table holder)

___ **Club Dues (Total from above)** \$ _____

___ Saturday Night Social Tickets \$5.00 each \$ _____

___ **Sale/Trade table(s) @ \$95 each (members only)** \$ _____

___ Collector Display table(s) free with sale table: \$ _____

TOTAL ENCLOSED (make check payable to O.K.C.A.) \$ _____

I have read and agree to abide by the OKCA show rules as set forth in this contract, and to hold the OKCA, its officers, and the Lane County Fair Board harmless for any accident, damage, loss, theft, or injury.

Signature _____ Date _____

*** PLEASE RETURN THIS ENTIRE PAGE or a photocopy. DO NOT CUT IT UP!***

www.oregonknifeclub.org

Doris Walsh-Little Missus-acid Etcher

by Jim Taylor.

By the 1980's, Sheffield had become a mere shadow of its former glory. Gone were the hand forgers, the master engravers, the hand grinders, the ivory cutters, the horn pressers and the acid etchers, to name but a

few. And yet, if one was on the inside, it was sometimes possible to find the right retired person, to whom one could take a cherished cutlery item, for the type of hand work no longer offered elsewhere. So it was that I came to meet up with Doris Walsh. It was known that Doris could sometimes be persuaded to produce an etching of Victorian style quality even at this late date.

Accordingly, a few of the Little Mester's still took work to Doris, for special etching tasks.

I had learned that Doris was to be photographed and interviewed for an article in one of the Sheffield publications. I went along, with permission of course, to hear what this remarkable lady had to say. By this time Doris was "officially" retired and had attained the age of 75. Without question, Doris Walsh knew more about the old and respected trade of acid etching than any other mortal still alive! I savored the conversation that I was able to have with Doris. It was only about ten minutes, but one that has stayed with me these past 16 years.

Little Missus, Doris Walsh, came up the hard way. Apprenticed at 14 years of age in the acid etching trade, Doris started her working life in 1927, "as an errand lass," (a gopher) and proceeded to learn the trade.

In order to keep this article at a manageable length, I will simply list a few of the memories that Doris related that day, together with a few comments of my own.

"It was years before I was allowed anywhere near a knife." Quite typical for an apprentice, whose apprenticeship would usually be for a seven year period.

"If I cut myself, the head girl would say,

"Wrap it up, quickly, don't get any blood on the knives." Once again, a remark full of irony, yet perfectly acceptable in those days.

"I've smoked heavily since I was 14, yet I've kept healthy all of my life." It has mystified me how many of the old style cutlers smoked and seemed to suffer no ailments. Do they use different chemicals today?

"My hair is still as black today as it ever was. I reckon that the acids are responsible." Here is a very strange fact of life. It has always been common knowledge, in Sheffield at least, that the acid

etchers, 95% of whom were female, did not turn grey!

There's food for thought there somewhere. The photograph of Doris, that I include here, was taken that day in 1988, when she was 75 years old.

The meeting with Doris took place at Butcher's Wheel, Arundel Street, Sheffield. A typical Little Mester tenement building, that once housed all manner of cutlery trade workers. Such buildings were usually multi-



A Civil War era, reverse acid etch on a Bowie knife. (authors inventory)

storied and built around a cobbled courtyard. The interiors more resembled a rabbit warren, than a place of work for skilled craftsmen to operate. Once again however, this was the accepted way of things. Butcher's Wheel was still standing when I left Sheffield, albeit in a dangerously decrepit state.

The journalist that interviewed Doris proceeded to tape her "thumbnail" description of the methods used to etch knife blades. This was later published and I am privileged to include that description here.

"It's really very simple. An engraver would design the master plate, and a transfer would be taken from that plate --it was

brass—by a steel press. The press's rollers rubbed the ink—it was made up of beeswax, Swedish pitch, soot and turpentine—onto tissue. You'd print six transfers at a time, then cut them up individually, and they'd be whetted off with warm water, making sure the imprints were straight and all in the same place on the knife. As head girl, I could stick on a gross in 15 minutes—four gross an hour. The fact that I earned anything from it was because I was quick. It all depended on speed.

"The knife blades would have to be cleaned with lime before you could work on them. It was awful, lime. It would get up your nose and all sorts. After whetting off, you'd



Original brass etching plate. 4" x 1 1/2" that is self explanatory. The right hand edge is stamped with the legend; "Engraved by Nicholson, 76 Carver St. Sheffield. (Author's inventory)

brush a spirit-based varnish on, very gently, with a camel-hair brush to protect the knife from the acid but allow the imprint to take. Varnish is the most important thing, because if it's not strong enough the acid will go through it and spoil the knife, and if it's too thick it won't release the ink. We'd then dry the knives in front of the fire before applying paraffin (kerosene) to release the ink without affecting the varnish.

"Then you'd put some more lime on to kill any grease, and then nitric acid, which would eat into the mark without harming the rest of the knife. When the acid had eaten in deep enough, you'd use spirits to clean it again, and the knife would be perfectly marked."

Sounds easy, huh? Don't you believe it!

As of this writing, I'm not able to ascertain if Doris Walsh is still as spry as she always was? I sure hope that she is. Doris would be 91 years old this year and perhaps she is no longer with us? If not, she has left a gaping hole in Sheffield's industrial records. One thing I am certain of, though. There will never be another Doris Walsh.

The Seek-re-tary Report

by elayne

We held the first meeting of the 2005 OKCA Knife Year at G. Willicker's Restaurant September 9. The attendance was 25.

We thanked **Bernard Levine** for the picnic held in his garden in June. It was a fun time by all.

We received a newsletter from the NorthWest Knife Collectors which told the saga of the cancelled October show which has been resurrected. The NWKC will hold a show in the Freighthouse Square, 430 E 25 St, Tacoma WA, October 16 and 17. These are the same dates as had been intended but at a different location. Best wishes to them.

Wayne Morrison reported he is trying to enthuse the display award makers to complete their knives by the December Winter Show. This would be ideal. It would allow additional time for engraving, scrimshanding, photographing, etc.

June Morrison will coordinate the potluck which is held after the December Winter Show. She will also continue with the job of the Saturday Nite Social at the 2005 Show. She needs to know what you will bring. Please call(541)942-1374 or email her june-lewismorrison@hotmail.com.

Ford Swauger has agreed to supply the 2005 Club knife. It will be our first with a Damascus blade.

Martin Brandt and **Wayne Goddard** will coordinate the ***** on Sunday. Remember you must be a tableholder to participate.

Bowen Cannoy has volunteered to help with the door prizes and raffle at the 2005 Show. His usual band of helpers may not be able to assist this year so you might contact him if you can volunteer time during the Show.

Larry Criteser and **Cheri Criteser** will head the grinding competition. He will advise when a decision has been made re the blade type.

The December Winter Show will be held December 11 at the Lane County Fairgrounds. We will be in the round Pavilion building. Please call Dennis (541)484-5564 or email okca@oregonknifeclub.org to get on the list for a free table at the Show.

Adjourn for show and tell.

See you at the meeting at G. Willickers' October 14.



Oregon Knife Collectors' 2005 Club Knife

This year we are offering a Ford Swauger folding pocket knife for the members of the OKCA. This will be our first Damascus folding knife. The steel is made in Ford's shop and is a blending of 1096 and L6 in what Ford calls a "twist pattern." The bolster shares this same

Damascus pattern. The handles are white bone that have been sealed, stabilized and polished. The handle length is 4 inches and the overall length is 7 inches. The liners are titanium and have been worked in what Ford refers to as a "lace pattern." This is a liner lock knife.



The knives will be serial numbered and marked as Oregon Knife Collectors knives.

This marking will be on the inside of the knife to preserve the beauty of this knife. These knives are only available to Oregon Knife Club members and the Oregon Special is only available to Oregon residents who purchase the set. There will be 25 sets available and 25 manual only knives making a total of 75 knives.



The Oregon Special knife is referred to as a double action knife and is a handle/bolster release. This mechanism is a Ford Swauger design and works quite nicely. Both knives will have a special hand-checked stainless steel thumb stud.

Serial number special requests will only be honored for those who have purchased knives with the same number in the last two years. All other serial numbers will be random drawn. Delivery will be in April at the Oregon Show.

This is a fund raising project for the OKCA so help out and also make an investment in what will soon be a very desirable knife to own. These knives will go fast so don't delay. One knife or set is available per member on this first offering. Additional knives can be purchased after December 15 if there are any left.

Knife Talk

The price on the manual knife is \$275 and the set will be \$625.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Regular manual knife _____ quantity.

Oregon Special set of two knives _____ quantity.

Total amount enclosed _____

Your 2003/2004 serial number if desired was _____

Please add \$8 for shipping if you are not able to pick this knife up at the Show on April 08-10, 2005.

Thoughts On Knifely Attitudes

By Merle Spencer

On our way to the Missoula show, I delivered the knife I had recently completed. I had promised it to a friend as a gift. As I have stated before, it takes me months to complete a knife, even though I use a blade ground by someone else. I may finish two in a year, or maybe only one if I do some extra decorating or engraving. After all, this is a hobby; and the finished knife will usually be a gift, anyway, so there's no

deadline to cause stress. (If the satisfaction of knife making could be stressful.) I did have a deadline once, when I agreed to complete a knife for the 2002 OKCA Show awards; and I have to admit there was a certain amount of stress when April was approaching and I still did not have the knife ready.

When I'm working on a knife, I sometimes take it in the rig with me if I go to coffee (you don't take it into the coffee shop) or down to work on the boat, or whatever else us old retired guys do. It makes a good conversation piece for discussing merits of a certain handle shape, or what should be engraved on the bolsters, or whether there is enough room between the choil and the hook at the end of the handle for all of the fingers to grasp the knife comfortably. Sometimes I ask someone else to comment on how the handle feels in the hand, especially if the intended recipient's hands are larger than mine.

I'm almost always asked what the steel is, and I'm pleased to discuss components of knife steels. I run into a fellow now and then who is a retired metallurgist. We have some interesting conversations.

Occasionally I take a finished knife with me. Sometimes while I'm talking to a complete stranger, the topic of knives will come up (usually at my instigation) and the person often expresses a keen, no pun intended, interest in knives. Then, when I

show a knife, the comments are usually, "Oh, isn't that beautiful!" We all like to hear that. "What is that handle made of? Is it some kind of stone?" Or "How do you get those pins to look like that? Are all those



dents on the back just for decoration, or do they serve some useful purpose?" And sometimes "What kind of steel is this? I've heard you can't get stainless steel sharp."

Then you get to talk

for a long time, explaining the stabilizing process, describing how mosaic pins are made, how back filing is done, the relative merits of different knife alloys and heat treating, and when you can call the steel stainless.

Putting a little carving or embossing on a sheath can also make an impression on an observer. Just a few flowers or some animal tracks on the leather, whether you're using your own sheath design or one included in the several instruction books written by knife makers, bring appreciative remarks. It's pleasing to see a fine knife handle secured in a well-made sheath.

Women, especially, appreciate fine knives. Many women use knives daily in the kitchen. I have often heard the expression, "Oh, that knife feels so good in the hand. How do you achieve that special feel?"

I usually answer, "I just keep taking off material till it feels good to me. I use finer and finer grit sandpaper and lots and lots of time."

One woman did say, "Keep taking pictures of your knives. I'd rather just look at them."

Of course I'm aware that in some areas there are negative attitudes toward knives, but I don't run into that much. In this neck of the woods, most of the people I talk to seem to appreciate any medium that lends to talent. The hunters and fishermen I run into

like good handle feel and useable blade shape.

Occasionally I hear the comment, "My granddad made a knife one time. I've sometimes thought I'd like to try it." And also I hear, "I've got an old knife at home I'll bet you'd like to see. I'll bring it next time."

Often in an antique store or a cutlery store while on a trip, in conversation I will ask, "Would you like to see one of my knives?"

The answer is almost always, "Sure!" or "I'd love to!"

Then you get to start all over again.

We stopped at a gift store in Coeur d'Alene and I mentioned, as I was looking at some knives with turquoise in the handles, that we had just been to the Montana Knife Makers show. The lady behind the counter asked, "Did you have a booth or table there?"

"Nope. Just went to look."

"I would like to see some of your knives."

I hadn't even said I had any.

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OKCA Free Classified Ads

Free classified ads will run up to three issues and then be dropped. Available only to paid members. Write your ad on anything you have handy (except gossamer wings) and email or snail mail to the **OKCA, PO Box 2091, Eugene OR 97402**. The number and size of ads submitted by a single member will be accepted or excepted dependent on available space and the mood of the editors.

Gallery Hardwoods (Larry Davis) has moved. We've moved the business from Sacramento to Eugene. Although we no longer operate a retail store, we'd be happy to show knife handle stock by appointment. Please call us (541)747-5725 for an appointment. Thanks and it's GREAT to be home again. O

Closing shop. For sale: 2 grinders (2" X 72") -1 Hardcore Grinder 1 year old variable speed 1.5 hp with 10" wheel and other attachments. 1 Square wheel with attachments 1 hp. -Forge 3 inlets LP - Anvil 130 lb Mankel -Baldor Buffer 3/4 hp - Mill/drill machine -Leather Working tools, lots -Hammers -Handle materials exotic woods stabilized ivory, etc.-Steels (various) and brass -Other tools, and woodworking items -Too much to list. Lowell C. Lockett JS ABS (541)756-1614 or spur@outdrs.net O

For Sale: Case toenails, melon testers, Barlows, peanuts, etc. Have lots of Case memorabilia, catalogs, decals. Have a lot of razor sharpening stones in original boxes. Plus knife boxes, various brands. Contact Frank Miller (541) 822-3458 fshnfrank@aol.com O

For Sale: Rick Dunkerley, MS Knife. Here is your rare opportunity to own one of Rick's knives (one of five) submitted for his MS test - the Ironwood Persian Fighter. This knife is the best of the best, having won "Best Damascus" at the 1997 Blade Show and the 1997 OKCA Show, as well as the Blade "Handmade Award" in 1997. It utilizes a Three Bar Composite blade with a Mosaic core. The guard is Damascus and the ironwood handle is fluted. Total length is 15 inches; blade length 10 inches. Asking price only \$3,499.00 for this unique knife. Robert Zielke (206)340-2008 (day) or RobtZielke@mindspring.com. Digital photo emailed upon request. O

For Sale: Silver Trident rare dual signature knife signed by both William W. Harsey and Chief Patches Watson. These men are the designers of the famous knife made by Gerber. The knife comes with a signed copy of Patches' book *Point Man*. Contact Bryan at (541)895-2557 or (541)953-2456 For other knives and info go to www.signedknife.com S

"The Bowie Knife": Unsheathing an American Legend by Norman Flayderman. 512 pages, over 260 color plates, hard cover. This book covers the fact, fiction and folklore of the world's most famous fighting knife. Only \$79.95 plus \$5.00 shipping. James D. Hayden Bookpeddler, 88360 Charly Lane, Springfield OR 97478. Check or Visa/MC orders (541)746-1819. Info email jhbkpddlr@rio.com O

KNIFE LAWS on-line. Federal, state, local. <http://pweb.netcom.com/~brlevine/apprk.htm> Bernard Levine (541)484-0294 <http://www.knife-expert.com/> S

Wanted: Serious Victorinox-only collector is looking for used and new knives and literature about them. What have you? Contact Dan Jacquart P O Box 145 Cochrane WI 4622-7167 (608)248-2794 or email tovsakcs@mwt.net S

For Sale: Remington (repo) bullet knives, complete set of 24 knives 1982-2004. All new in boxes, many extras. 48 knives in all, \$2400.00 OBO. David Scheffer (580)227-3835 S

Books on US Military Knives and Government Reports. Send \$2.00 for a list of over 300 declassified govt. reports and



current listing of military knife books in stock. Knife Books - PO Box 5866, Deptford, NJ 08096 or free via e-mail at trz@mcsystems.net. S

For Sale: One of only three Cole made Mark 2. These have been written up in Frank Traska's articles. Email for pictures and price. Trades considered. I also have other Cole made knives. Doug Smith Fremont CA. Contact dsmith559@comcast.net S

Wanted - Robeson whittler pattern #633499 in brown bone. Should say Pocket Eze on the shield. Consideration given to one close to this pattern. ibdennis (541)484-5564 or ibdennis@oregonknifeclub.org S

WANTED: Pre-1940 sunfish/toenails. No reworks. VG+. scott@elephanttoenails.com (256)439-0143. Visit www.elephanttoenails.com, the only website exclusively about old toenails, plus an extensive photo gallery! J

Official Scout Blades a new book by Ed Holbrook 112 pgs. Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, and Camp Fire Girls. Pocket knives, sheath knives, axes, 99% complete from 1910 to date + price guide \$25.00 + \$3.00 postage Ed Holbrook 12150 S. Casto Rd. Oregon City OR. 97045

For Sale -New book, *KEEN KUTTER POCKET KNIVES* by Alvin Sellens. Soft bound, 239 pages, this book is full of useful information on markings, descriptions of the knives, period offered, and a price guide. Illustrations all seem to be taken from Keen Kutter catalogs. \$19.95 plus \$2 shipping. Quality Blade Books, P.O. Box 41854, Eugene, OR 97404 or <http://www.qualitybladebooks.com>

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The Knewsletter
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Events Calendar October 2004

----- October 2004 -----
 Oct 16-17 - Washington Knife Show - Tacoma WA (KW)
 Oct 22-24 - Blade Forging & Knife Expo -Spokane WA (KW-B)
 Oct 22-24 - NKCA Ohio Show - Wilmington (KW-B-KI)
 ----- November 2004 -----
 Nov 06-07 - Mt Vernon Knife Show - IL (KW-B)
 Nov 12-14 - New York Custom Show -(KW-B)
 Nov 13-14 - Arizona Knife Show - Mesa AZ (KW-B)
 Nov 13-14 - FMKC -Ft Myers FL (KW-B)
 ----- December 2004 -----
 Dec 02-04 - Parkers Knife Show - Pigeon Forge TN (KW-B)
 Dec 11-11 - **Oregon Winter Mini Knife Show - Eugene**
 ----- January 2005 -----
 Jan 28-30 - Gator Cutlery Show -Lakeland FL (KW)
 Jan 28-30 - American Bladesmith Expo -Reno NV (KW)
 Jan 28-30 - Las Vegas Custom Show -Nevada (KW-B)
 Jan 28-30 - Gateway Knife Show - St Louis MO (KW)
 ----- February 2005 -----
 Feb 26-27 - Atlanta Knife Show (KW)
 ----- March 2005 -----
 Mar 04-06 - NW Georgia Show - Dalton GA (KW)
 Mar 04-06 - East Coast Custom - NY (B)
 Mar 18-20 - Arizona Custom Show -Scottsdale AZ (KW)
 Mar 18-20 - Ohio Spring Show NW (KW)

----- April 2005 -----
 Apr 01-03 - Badger Knife Show -Janesville WI (KW)
 Apr 08-10 - **Oregon Knife Show - Eugene Oregon**
 Apr 22-24 - NKCA Shepherdsville KY Show (KW)
 Apr 22-24 - Wolverine Fall Show -Novi MI (KW)

DINNER MEETING



Thursday Evening
 October 14, 2004
G. Willickers
 440 Coburg Road
 Eugene, Oregon

6:00 PM Dinner
7:00 PM Meeting

Come Knife with us!
Show-N-Tell -
Bring a special knife!

Contact Dennis or Elayne (541) 484-5564 for additional information on OKCA events. For non-OKCA events, contact the sponsoring organization. Additional info = (B)lade Mag. -(KW) Knife World - (KI) Knives Illustrated

